

THE **TRAVEL CLUB**

Pre-Departure Itinerary

Florence & the Villages of Tuscany

9 DAYS: Saturday, September 23 – Sunday, October 1, 2023

ENJOY “CLASSIC ITALY” as we pair exquisite Florence – Italy’s Renaissance capital - with Tuscany’s medieval villages. Florence is a stunning medieval city considered to be one of the world’s most beautiful with its palaces, churches and museums. So you won’t be overwhelmed by this breathtaking collection—we’ve included a half-day walking tour to acquaint you with the city’s most famous areas and a “skip-the-line” visit to the Uffizi Gallery. (Be sure to hit the third level where you’ll get marvelous views of the Ponte Vecchio!) We’ll have a free day to visit the delightful antique flea markets at Piazza dei Ciompi, the jewelry shops along Ponte Vecchio, the Boboli Gardens, and the espresso cafés along the Piazza della Repubblica. Leaving Florence we take the “road less traveled” and visit charming Cortona – an ancient Etruscan village; and Arezzo for a walking tour and time to browse the famous Antiques Fair. We’ll stay three nights in Anghiari, rated one of the most beautiful villages in Italy. Outside its 12th and 13th-century fortified walls, the countryside around Anghiari seems untouched—dotted with monasteries and archaeological sites. Inside, we’ll be charmed by small squares, artisan shops, towers and churches.

INCLUDES

- Round-trip regularly scheduled Alitalia Airlines flights from Boston to Florence, via Rome (land only pricing available if you prefer to make your own air arrangements)
- Seven nights’ three-and four-star accommodations
- Eleven meals: seven buffet/continental breakfasts, four dinners at local restaurants
- Escorted round-trip, private airport/hotel transfers
- Services of professional local Tour Manager

ACCOMMODATIONS

DAY 1 Overnight flight from Boston

DAYS 2–5 Hotel Glance, Florence

DAYS 6–8 Hotel La Meridiana, Anghiari

DAY 9 Return flight to Boston

or similar accommodations

RATES

\$3,599 per person double occupancy

Includes round-trip airfare, fuel surcharge and all air taxes and fees.

SINGLE FRIENDLY PRICING Single supplement is \$575. We have a limited number of single supplements available at just \$475. Call to reserve. Triple accommodations may be available upon request. Fuel surcharge, air taxes and fees subject to change. Passport required. Per person deposit is \$300.

FEATURES

Florence walking tour including San Lorenzo area, Santa Maria Novella and its ancient pharmacy, The Duomo, Piazza Santa Croce; visit to the Uffizi Gallery and the Accademia to admire the *David*. Visit Cortona. Guided tour of Anghiari, visit the village of Monterchi. Visit il Faggeto olive oil farm for a visit followed by a cooking lesson and dinner of your preparations with wine. Guided tour of Arezzo.

DAILY ITINERARY

Day 1: Overnight Flight

Depart from Boston this evening on ITA Airways. Dinner is served aloft along while crossing the Atlantic. Relax and enjoy in-flight entertainment.

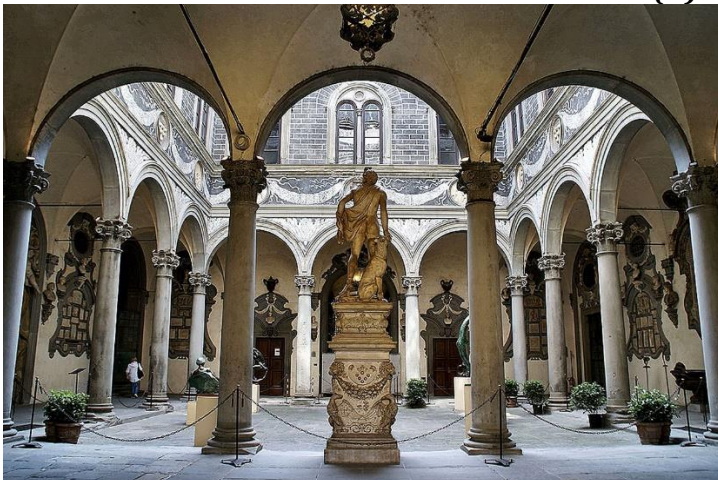
Day 2: Arrive Rome – connecting flight to Florence

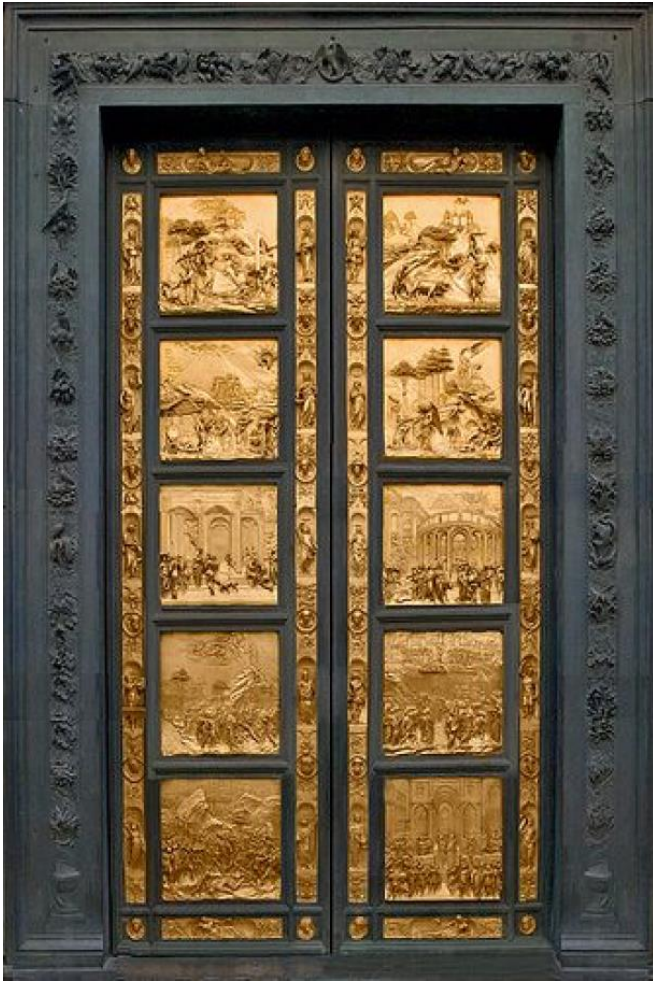
Arrive Rome. Continental breakfast will be served on board before landing. In Rome, clear immigration and follow signs for the gate for our connecting flight to Florence. **Arrive Florence.** After passport control and immigration, proceed to baggage claim and retrieve luggage. Pass through customs and move into the Arrivals Hall where we'll meet our local Tour Manager, who will assist with boarding the transfer coach to the hotel. This evening we'll enjoy a Welcome Dinner with wine at the hotel. **(D)**



Day 3: Florence

Florence is a city best explored on foot to absorb the heritage and culture found around every corner. Today we'll set out on a panoramic walking tour that begins with the San Lorenzo area and the first Renaissance church built by Brunelleschi, the Medici chapels and Palazzo Medici Riccardi. We'll see the church of Santa Maria Novella and its ancient pharmacy – the oldest in the world. Visit the Duomo with its magnificent belltower by Giotto and the Baptistry with the bronze door by Ghiberti. Walk the narrow alleys where Dante Alighieri walked and reach Piazza Santa Croce. We'll finish our tour as we cross the River Arno at Ponte Vecchio to see the enormous Pitti Palace. **(B)**





Day 4: Florence

After breakfast our exploration continues as we walk to Piazza Signoria and the Palazzo Vecchio. Here we'll have admission to one of the most important museums in the world – The Uffizi Gallery. After our visit we'll have free time for lunch and shopping and meet our guide in Piazza della Signoria before heading to the Accademia to see Michelangelo's *David*. **(B)**



Day 5: Florence – free day

Today we'll have a free day to explore on our own. Tonight we'll enjoy a Florentine dinner with wine at a local restaurant. **(B,D)**

Day 6: Florence – Cortona – transfer to Anghiari

After breakfast at the hotel we'll depart Florence and make a stop in Cortona – a spectacular-located hilltop town. This small Etruscan village is particularly picturesque due to its typically medieval architecture, consisting of ancient palazzos, narrow cobbled streets, small artisan shops and classic Tuscan trattorias. We continue onto Anghiari and enjoy dinner with wine at a local restaurant. **(B,D)**



Day 7: Anghiari

After breakfast, we'll depart for a short guided walking tour of Anghiari including the Museum of the Battle and Palazzo Taglieschi. In the afternoon we'll continue to the medieval village of Monterchi with its narrow streets, small artisan workshops and cafes. Monterchi is associated with Piero della Francesca, a master of the 1400s. Our next stop is at an olive oil farm where we'll enjoy a visit, followed by a cooking lesson. For dinner we'll enjoy our creations along with Tuscan wine. **(B,D)**



Day 8: Anghiari – Arezzo

After breakfast we'll depart for Arezzo where we'll enjoy a guided tour featuring the city highlights and the Basilica of St. Francis where we'll view the frescoes by Piero della Francesca. After the walking tour we'll have time to browse the Antiques Fair of Arezzo...the queen of the city's events. The fair fills the streets of the historic center with hundreds of exhibitors. After our return to Anghiari, we'll enjoy our farewell dinner at a local restaurant. **(B,D)**



Day 9: Return flight to Boston





Piazza della Signoria Fountain of Neptune



Ponte Vecchio



San Lorenzo Market



Accommodations...

Hotel Glance Via Nazionale, 23, Florence, 50123, Italy

September 24-25-26-27

Located in central Florence, 1,300 feet from Fortezza da Basso, the 4-star Hotel Glance offers a lounge bar, a rooftop outdoor pool with panoramic views of the city. It also features free WiFi access. With a contemporary décor, the rooms come with a flat-screen TV with cable channels. All rooms are equipped with a private bathroom fitted with a walk-in shower or bathtub, free toiletries and a hairdryer. A buffet breakfast with sweet and savory items, fresh fruits and vegetable extracted juices is served each morning at the hotel. The Ponte Vecchio Bridge and Florence Cathedral are a 10-minute walk away.



Hotel La Meridiana Piazza IV Novembre, 8 Anghiari**September 28-29-30**

The landmark in the heart of the Valtiberina “La Meridiana” in Anghiari is a charming family-owned inn. In a homey and quiet environment you can lose yourself and discover the beauty of this area while you are a guest in a comfortable and renovated hotel. A few steps from the town theatre, “La Meridiana” is in the town’s historic center. Amenities include: lift, TV room and coffee bar while in-room services include hairdryer, wi fi, mini bar, TV and safe.

**Florence, Italy: cradle of the Renaissance**

Florence's museums, palaces, and churches house some of the greatest artistic treasures in the world. The most popular and important sites in Florence include the Cathedral, the Baptistery, the Uffizi, the Bargello, and the Accademia. The churches of Santa Maria Novella and Santa Croce are veritable art galleries, and the library of San Lorenzo is a magnificent exhibition of Michelangelo's architectural genius. Wander some of the oldest streets in the city until you reach the Arno River, cross the Ponte Vecchio, and experience the "newest" area of Florence, the Oltrarno. Be sure to set aside time to see the vast and varied art collection housed in the Pitti Palace. When you grow weary of museums and monuments, head outdoors. Spend a day at the Boboli Gardens or climb the hill to the church of San Miniato al Monte to experience an enchanting view of Florence.

What to See in Florence**Piazza della Signoria and Palazzo Vecchio**

Florence's most famous square is Piazza della Signoria, the heart of the historic center and a free open-air sculpture exhibit. The Loggia della Signoria holds some important statues including a copy of Michelangelo's David. The piazza has been Florence's political center since the middle ages and Florence's town hall, the medieval Palazzo Vecchio, sits on the piazza. Around the piazza are cafes and restaurants.

Il Duomo - Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore

Florence's most popular site is its Duomo (cathedral), the Cattedrale de Santa Maria del Fiore. The huge Gothic duomo was begun in 1296, consecrated in 1436, and holds 20,000 people. Its exterior, made of green,

pink, and white marble, has several elaborate doors and interesting statues. Inside, Brunelleschi's Dome is a masterpiece of construction.

The Baptistery

The Baptistery of John the Baptist, from the 11th century, is one of Florence's oldest buildings. Its exterior is made of green and white marble and has three sets of amazing bronze doors (reproductions - the originals are in the Duomo Museum, also worth a visit). Inside, you can see some mosaics and a marble pavement of the zodiac.

Campanile - Bell Tower

The Campanile, bell tower, is in Piazza del Duomo. The first story was designed by Giotto and it is commonly called Giotto's Campanile. Buy a ticket and climb the 414 stairs (no lift) for great views of the Cathedral and its dome and the city of Florence and surroundings.

Ponte Vecchio

The Ponte Vecchio (old bridge), built in 1345, was Florence's first bridge across the Arno River and is the only surviving bridge from Florence's medieval days (others were destroyed in World War II). The Ponte Vecchio is still lined with shops selling gold and silver jewelry. From the bridge, you'll have a great view along the Arno River and beyond.

Galleria degli Uffizi

The Galleria degli Uffizi holds the world's most important collection of Renaissance art but it's also Italy's most crowded museum so it's a good idea to buy tickets ahead to avoid long ticket lines. The Uffizi holds thousands of paintings from medieval to modern times and many antique sculptures, illuminations, and tapestries. Artists whose works you'll see include Michelangelo, Giotto, Botticelli, Leonardo da Vinci, Perugino, and Raphael.

Galleria dell' Accademia

Florence's Galleria dell' Accademia holds important paintings and sculptures from the 13th-16th centuries. Michelangelo's David, probably the most famous sculpture in the world, is in the Galleria dell' Accademia as well as other sculptures by Michelangelo. You'll also find an interesting collection of musical instruments, begun by the Medici family.

Boboli Garden and Pitti Palace

Cross the Ponte Vecchio to the Giardino di Boboli, a huge park on a hillside in the middle of Florence behind the Pitti Palace. Here you'll find beautiful gardens and fountains and a great view of Florence from the Forte Belvedere (picture). Open daily at 8:15 (except some Mondays in winter) with seasonal closing times. The Pitti Palace, Florence's largest palazzo, was once the seat of the Medici family.

Santa Croce

Santa Croce, in Piazza Santa Croce, is the largest Franciscan church in Italy and holds the tombs of several important Florentines including Michelangelo and Dante. The vast interior contains some exceptional stained glass windows and frescoes. One of Brunelleschi's most important works, the Cappella dei Pazzi, is in Santa Croce. Admission includes the museum and tours given by volunteers when available. Open Monday-Saturday, 9:30-5:30 and Sunday, 1-5:30.

Michelangelo in Florence: Where to See the Art of Michelangelo in Florence, Italy

Born and raised in Tuscany, Michelangelo Buonarroti has long been associated with the city of Florence, which holds a small trove of many of his masterpieces. Florence is where you will find the sculpture of David, which is one of the great icons of Renaissance art, as well as numerous sculptures, architectural

projects, and a painting from the Italian artist. Here is a list of Michelangelo's great works - and where to find them - in Florence.

Michelangelo's Art in the Galleria dell'Accademia

The Galleria dell'Accademia houses the original sculpture of David, considered one of Michelangelo's finest works of art. David once stood in front of the Palazzo Vecchio, Florence's City Hall, as a symbol of the city's independence. There are now copies of David in front of the Palazzo Vecchio and in the center of Piazzale Michelangelo, a hilltop square famous for its panorama of Florence.

A few other Michelangelo works reside in the Accademia. They are "The Four Prisoners," a marble group designed for the tomb of Pope Julius II, and a statue of Saint Matthew.

Casa Buonarroti, Michelangelo's House

Michelangelo once owned this house on Via Ghibellina where the Casa Buonarroti is located. This small museum contains several sculptures and drawings, including two of Michelangelo's early relief sculptures: Battle of the Centaurs and Madonna of the Stairs.

Michelangelo's Art in the Bargello

Florence's premier museum for sculpture, the Museo Nazionale del Bargello, boasts a few Michelangelo sculptures, too. The most famous of these is Bacchus, a statue depicting a tipsy Bacchus (God of Wine) adorned with grapes and holding a chalice. Additionally in the Bargello, there's Michelangelo's "David Apollo," which bears similarity to the David in the Accademia; a bust of Brutus; and the Tondo Pitti, a relief sculpture in the round depicting the Virgin Mary and baby Jesus.

Michelangelo's Art in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo

The Museum of the Duomo, which holds many prized objects from Santa Maria del Fiore (the Duomo), is where you'll find The Deposition, another fine sculpture by the Renaissance master. Also called The Florentine Pietà (Michelangelo's more famous Pietà is in Rome), The Deposition shows the dead Christ being held up by the Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalene, and Nicodemus.

Michelangelo's Art in Palazzo Vecchio

Florence's City Hall is the site of yet another Michelangelo sculpture, "The Genius of Victory." But it is also where Michelangelo was to paint a monumental "Battle of Cascina." This painting was never initiated, though some art historians believe it may be "lost."

Where to Shop in Florence

From fine stationery and artisan crafts to leather and gold, Florence is an ideal destination for the refined shopper. Following are some ideas of where to go to buy the best that Florence has to offer.

High Fashion and Mainstream Shopping in Florence

If you're looking for haute couture fashions, such as Gucci, Pucci, or Ferragamo (the latter two design houses being native to Florence), head to the area around the streets of Via Tornabuoni, Via della Vigna Nuova, and Via dei Calzaiuoli. These streets in the Santa Maria Novella district are teeming with the latest fashions from the biggest Italian and international designers.

For clothing, housewares, and other items affordable to mere mortals, check out the shops around the streets of Piazza della Repubblica, such as on Via Calimala. Here you'll find name brands like Zara and department stores like Rinascente.

Outdoor Flea Markets and Antiques in Florence

Outdoor markets are common all over Florence, with the most famous being the vendors in and around the Mercato Centrale in the San Lorenzo district. Inside the market, you will find fantastic food stalls, selling meats, cheeses, olives, breads, and countless goodies to fill up a picnic basket. Vendors of clothing, leather goods, ceramics, etc., reside in the stalls outside of the market. The Mercato Nuovo, near the Ponte Vecchio, is another place to look for discount finds and tourist trinkets. Across the Arno, Piazza Santo Spirito is the place to go for produce and other provisions as well as vintage clothing and accessories, antiques, jewelry, pottery, and more. The produce market is open daily except Sunday. An arts and crafts market operates here every second Sunday of the month. Further away from the tourist track, a weekly (Tuesdays) market operates at the Parco delle Cascine. The market is chock-a-block with vendors – around 300 – selling clothing, linens, housewares, antiques, and more. For a more local experience – and likely a better bargain – the Cascine Market is a good bet.

Florentine Specialty Items

Beyond designer duds and vintage finds, Florence is a great city in which to purchase unique gifts. For beautiful marbled stationery, visit Zecchi (Via dello Studio 19r) or Il Papiro (Piazza del Duomo 24r) in the San Giovanni neighborhood. Leather goods can be had all over the city, but the Santa Croce Leather Workshop, in the cloister of the church of Santa Croce, is the most famous place to find leather items, from jackets and belts to bookmarks. Another church in which you can find a sweet souvenir is Santa Maria Novella, where there is an apothecary that has been creating perfumes and aromatic oil blends since the 13th century. Gold is a classic item often searched for in Florence, most usually because of its traditional association with the Ponte Vecchio. Traverse Florence's most famous bridge, and you'll see gold sellers lining each side of it. Whether the gold here is a bargain is unclear, but you can find high quality, unique necklaces, earrings, bracelets, watches, rings, and more.

MUSEUMS and APPERITIVO

Don't confuse the Galleria della Uffizi with the more well-known Uffizi Gallery. Instead of the large, well-known art museum housed in the Uffizi Palace, this smaller gallery is located behind the Palace, through a narrow street off of the Piazza Signoria, and around a quintessentially Italian street corner.

In this small, yet multi-story, gallery live two classic Florentine traditions. One is the reputation of Florence for being the home of artists throughout the centuries. This gallery displays the works of local contemporary artists. The second is the thriving Florentine tradition of aperitivo.

Aperitivo is a widespread practice in Florence, but not one you'll necessarily find in a guide book or online. Essentially, aperitivo is the Italian version of happy hour. Restaurants and cafes all around the city set out food between 7 p.m. and 9 p.m., and with the purchase of a beverage (glass of wine, a mixed drink or even a soda) you are welcome to the food they have set out. This can range from just a few bowls of nuts at a small corner bar/coffee shop; or a whole buffet of delectable Florentine specialties.

The small Galleria della Uffizi has a beautiful downstairs cafe with a polished wood bar, and more importantly, one of the biggest and most delicious aperitivo buffets in the city. Buy a drink, help yourself to the classic Florentine food, and keep going back to check on new items being brought out during the evening. If you're lucky, you'll have a chance to try the involtini de melanzane, a slice of eggplant rolled around a piece of fresh mozzarella covered in tomato sauce and baked in the oven. Corner of Via de Leoni and Via de Neri.

The Buonarroti Family dedicated themselves to the idea of creating a beautiful building filled with the works of renowned artists at Casa Buonarroti. This small gallery, begun in 1612, was originally created by the artist Michelangelo's nephew, and has remained essentially unchanged over three centuries. It displays not

only many early works of Michelangelo, but a varied and precious art collection that the Buonarroti family has assembled since the 17th century. Via Ghibellina 70; 055-241752

VIEW FROM THE TOP

Walking up to the Piazzale Michelangelo gives you a chance to burn off all of those appetitivo calories, and make room for some late-night gelato. The long, “hidden” stairway up to this vantage point is worth every step. The Piazzale affords you one of the most breathtaking and all-encompassing views of the city, no matter what time of day.

To get there, cross the Ponte alla Grazie into the less-frequented “Oltarno” region of Florence, and make a left. Follow the path along the river, and make a right on the street right after the small neighborhood park. Make a left on Via de Renai, a right on Olmo, then veer to left and go up Via San Miniato. Keep walking straight up until you see the large stone archway. Walk through it and take the stairs up to the Piazzale.

SPLURGE ON SHOPPING

Falsi Gioelli affords another incredible view: beautiful baubles just waiting to be purchased. This small shop off of one of the main shopping streets, Via del Calzaiuoli, features truly one-of-a-kind handmade jewelry that you will not see all of your friends wearing when you get home. Don’t let the street it is on fool you, it may look like an unassuming alley, but it’s actually home to many worthwhile shops. Via dei Tavolini, 5/R, 055-287237

Abacus Bookshop is another small shop on a street most visitors to Florence would not think to walk down. Off of the Piazza San Lorenzo, which holds a fantastic outdoor market, is Via de Ginori. The Abacus Bookshop sells hand-bound leather books, hand-made paper, and stationary. Some are beautifully imprinted with the fleur-de-lis, the symbol of Florence. This shop is worth a gander just to marvel at the craftsmanship of these items. When you’re done at the bookshop, make sure to bargain with the street vendors nearby at the San Lorenzo outdoor market. Via dei Ginori 28/30r.

Proof of Citizenship: *US citizens require a passport with at least six months' validity for entry into Ireland. Passports are the responsibility of the traveler.*

PLEASE NOTE: *This pre-departure itinerary is designed to give you an idea of how this itinerary is structured. We reserve the right to make any changes to your final itinerary if deemed necessary, at any time prior to departure.*

PLEASE NOTE: *This is not your final itinerary. You will receive final documents (itinerary, tickets (if applicable), etc.) approximately 2–3 weeks prior to departure. Although we try our best to ensure that information is accurate at the time of publication, we are not responsible for any error, omission, misprint or liability that results from the use (or misuse) of this information.*